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Home race for Luca Ludwig: Eyeing the top of the table

- Nürburgring a home race for reigning ADAC GT Masters champion Luca Ludwig
- Mercedes driver reckons he is still in with a chance of retaining his title

Munich: Luca Ludwig (27, DEU) is one of the most high-profile drivers in the ADAC GT Masters. Together with Sebastian Asch (30, DEU), he won the drivers' title last year. The experienced duo in a Mercedes-AMG entered by AMG-Team Zakspeed have already recorded two wins in 2016 and must again be considered championship contenders. For Ludwig, who lives in Bonn, the fifth race weekend of the Super Sports Car League at the Nürburgring (5th - 7th August) constitutes a home race. In this interview, he explains the special significance of the event.

Of all the drivers in this year's ADAC GT Masters starting field, you live closest to the Nürburgring. A home race in the real sense of the word...

"I practically grew up at the Nürburgring, because my father competed in so many races there. At one stage, it was almost one event per week. Even now, I often go down there to watch races – both modern and historic cars. I feel a great affinity with the circuit and with the surroundings. I always enjoy the car journey through the forest landscape. Ten minutes from the Nürburgring, we have a small hunting lodge where I also like to chill out."

You're the local favourite for this race. Does that provide an extra dose of motivation?

"No, not really. We always have a lot of guests there, including friends, family members and sponsors, and they have certain expectations. But we have to approach each race with equal determination. However, we do have some unfinished business at the Nürburgring, so this does indeed provide a little extra incentive. Last year's race weekend there was our weakest performance of the season. We made a few mistakes, which meant that the battle at the top got tighter once again."

Your team is headquartered even closer to the Nürburgring, so this must be a special event for Zakspeed too...

"Definitely. Our team boss, Peter Zakowski, had a lot of success at the Nürburgring in his day, and you can see that he wants to put on a good show for his fans. We drivers will be playing our part. I also think that the track suits our Mercedes-AMG. We're aiming for a finish in the top positions this weekend."

Of your twelve victories in the ADAC GT Masters, one was at the Nürburgring. How well do you remember that?

"Very clearly. It was 2009, my first season in the ADAC GT Masters. The race went well right from the start. Up until the Nürburgring event, I had already won twice, but the success at the Ring was far more emotional. It's a feeling I would like to experience again. There are some race tracks where I've won several times, but I've been waiting for my second Nürburgring victory for some years now. That bugs me a bit."

This is your seventh ADAC GT Masters campaign. What do you like about the series?

"The ADAC GT Masters has become more professional over the years. This is apparent from the fact that the grid now has more and more different car brands and the line-up of drivers is more prestigious than ever before. As a racing driver, you want to pit yourself against opponents who are equally good, because that makes it more fun. And that's what I get from the ADAC. The level of competition is incredibly high. It's all about thousandths of a second, and every mistake is punished mercilessly. Fans and in the media are taking more and more notice of the series. So as an overall package, it's very attractive for us drivers."

MEDIA INFORMATION

As regards the current season, how would you sum up the first four of the seven weekends?

“The season opener was impressive, for me personally and for the team. Two pole positions in the first two qualifying sessions, two wins with Sebastian (Asch) in the first three races – a highly respectable start. After that, though, we seemed to lose our consistency. At the Red Bull Ring, we were highly methodical in both races and scored some decent points. That’s precisely what gave us the edge in 2015 when we won the championship. We’d like to maintain this upturn in the remaining races.”

What are your expectations for the last six races?

“I think that we can do well at the Nürburgring, Zandvoort and Hockenheim. If we can get through the races without any mishap, we can certainly have a say in the destination of the title. I continue to believe in our strengths as a driver pairing.”

Fans wishing to experience the ADAC GT Masters live at the racetrack can purchase tickets for all fixtures for the price of 20 euros, which includes access to the paddock, from www.adac.de/motorsport.

2016 ADAC GT Masters schedule

15/04/16 - 17/04/16	Motorsport Arena Oschersleben
29/04/16 - 01/05/16	Sachsenring
03/06/16 - 05/06/16	Lausitzring (with DTM)
22/07/16 - 24/07/16	Red Bull Ring/Austria
05/08/16 - 07/08/16	Nürburgring
19/08/16 - 21/08/16	Circuit Park Zandvoort/Netherlands
30/09/16 - 02/10/16	Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg

Further information at: www.adac.de/gt-masters.

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